



Martin J. Chávez, Mayor
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Immediate Release

City of Albuquerque

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Plague Confirmed in Bernalillo County Dog

ALBUQUERQUE – The Albuquerque Environmental Health Department's Bio-Disease Management program has received confirmation from the New Mexico Department of Health of a canine plague case in Bernalillo County. This is the first confirmed case of plague in Bernalillo County this year. The dog is recovering on antibiotic therapy. It apparently became ill after consuming an infected animal carcass.

Last year, plague was reported in several animals from around the state. There were 4 human cases of plague last year in New Mexico, 3 from Santa Fe County and 1 from Bernalillo County. None were fatal.

Plague is a bacterial infection, found in some animal populations in the southwest, especially in New Mexico and Colorado. Plague bacteria are transmitted to humans and other animals through the bite of infected fleas or direct exposure to contaminated tissue. Pets can often be exposed to plague while roaming outside, and can sometimes transmit plague directly through respiratory droplets. Prairie dogs, rock squirrels and other small mammals are frequently involved in plague transmission. Plague can be treated with antibiotics if detected early. Symptoms can include headache, fever, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, and painful and/or swollen lymph nodes are characteristic of infection.

The Bio-Disease Management staff recommends limiting risk of exposure to plague-carrying fleas, especially in the areas where the disease has been found in the past, in the Foothills east of Tramway, and in the East Mountains and Tijeras Canyon areas. People should avoid close contact with wild animals by not feeding, petting or otherwise approaching squirrels, prairie dogs or other small mammals. Pets should wear flea collars or be dusted frequently for fleas. Infectious fleas can jump great distances between hosts. Dead animals suspected to be victims of plague can be reported to the Bio-Disease Management Program via the 311 system.

Please contact Dr. Mark DiMenna of the Albuquerque Environmental Health Bio-Disease Management Program at 873-6613 ext. 223 (office) or 263-3299 (mobile).